STEPNEY

PUBLIC

Readers Please Note:

It is necessary in all references to this book to quote fully the author's name, its title, and the appended particulars; also, the last date recorded on its Issue Register :—

D 643

ADDRESS—
ST. GEORGE'S LIBRARY,
TOWN HALL,
CABLE STREET, E.1

LONDON, E.

LIBRARIES

7/6 (orig 8/-)

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
LIBRARY SERVICE

Author

Title

BOOK STORE

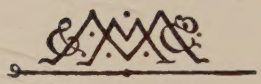
Books or discs must be returned on or before the last date stamped on label or on card in book pocket. Books or discs can be renewed by telephone, letter or personal call unless required by another reader. After library hours use the Ansafone Service (01-698 7347). For hours of opening and charges see notices at the above branch, but note that all lending departments close at 1 pm on Wednesday and all libraries are closed on Sundays, Good Friday, Christmas Day, Bank Holidays

METROPOLITAN
SPECIAL COLLECTION

LORD BALFOUR

born July 25, 1848 : died March 19, 1930

"Fearless, resolved and negligently great"

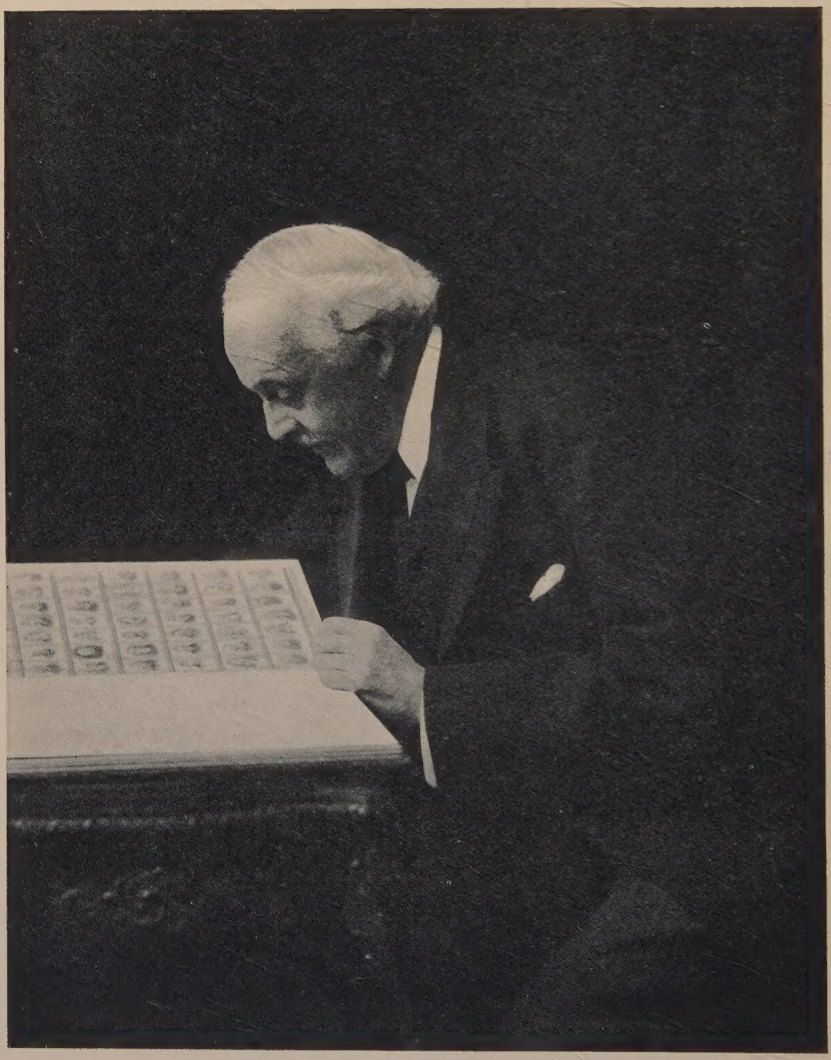


MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA · MADRAS
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO
DALLAS · ATLANTA · SAN FRANCISCO

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
OF CANADA, LIMITED
TORONTO

STEPNEY PUBLIC
ST. GEORGE'S
LIBRARIES



THE EARL OF BALFOUR, K.G., O.M., ETC.

942.0813
MAL/083

LORD BALFOUR

A MEMORY

BY

SIR IAN MALCOLM

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1930

COPYRIGHT

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

DEDICATED
TO HIS FRIENDS

INTRODUCTION

I SHOULD not like anyone to begin reading this Memoir under the misapprehension that it is more than it claims to be : namely, a personal impression of Lord Balfour's character, studied and admired by a friend, a parliamentary follower, and a private secretary whose first meeting with his future Chief dates back to 1890. The limitations of this little volume are, therefore, manifest from the outset. It has no pretensions to historical completeness or to literary merit ; perhaps I can best describe its form and contents as being those of a private letter to a personal friend living on the other side of the world. It does not presume to give more than a portrait of the man as seen through my own eyes, unaided by the memories of many colleagues and fellow private secretaries who could certainly have enriched the likeness by adding traits and touches which, through want of knowledge, I have left out. Did I describe it as a portrait ? I should rather have said a " rough sketch " drawn during a short sitting.

Those who want a full Biography will not find it, or anything like it, here. But, before long I hope, there will be published Lord Balfour's account of the first forty years of his life, brilliantly written by his own master hand ; and, in the fullness of time, another volume or two, but from another pen, to complete the narrative of his Day's Work.

IAN MALCOLM.

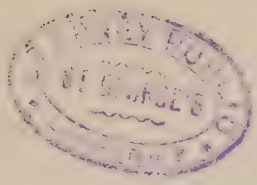
EX VOTO

A MERE word of thanks is wholly inadequate to express the gratitude that I feel towards those whose work is reproduced in this modest Memoir of Lord Balfour. I am deeply indebted to all of them : to Sir Owen Seaman who has allowed me to include his noble " In Memoriam" tribute ; to colleagues, for snap-shots that have been enlarged ; and to other friends, among the Press-photographers, who, in the course of many years, have given me specimens of their art. I beg all of them to believe that, had I known how to trace them, I should, of course, have sought leave to reproduce their pictures. As it is I can only offer this acknowledgment of my warmest thanks for the permission which I feel sure they would have given me if I could have asked for it.

IAN M.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Apologia	3
An Early Portrait : 1890-1906	7
In Opposition : 1906-1911	15
Our Leader	21
A Survey : 1911	29
At the Foreign Office : 1916-17	37
The First Balfour Mission to U.S.A. : 1917	43
Continued	49
London and Paris : 1917-18	59
The Supreme War Council : 1918	65
At the Peace Conference : 1919	71
The Treaty Signed : 1919	79
The Last Phase : 1920-30	85
Deeds and Words	93
Leisure	101
De Amicitia	109
Balfour and Foch	117
"Vale"	123



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

The Earl of Balfour, K.G. - - - *Frontispiece*
From a photograph by J. Russell & Sons, Baker Street, London

FACING PAGE

The Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary: Paris 1919 - - - - - - - - 22

A draft page of Mr. Balfour's despatch of January 10, 1917: in his own handwriting - - - 40

Crossing the Atlantic: 1917 - - - - - - 45

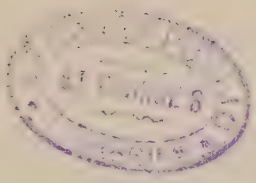
Mr. Balfour and Mr. Choate driving through New York City: 1917 - - - - - - - 52

Mr. Balfour and Field-Marshal Lord Haig in the garden of the Trianon Hotel, Versailles: 1918 60

Mr. Balfour and the Author: 1919 - - - 88

Facsimile Reproduction of MS. of Sir Owen Seaman's "In Memoriam" - - - - 112

APOLOGIA



APOLOGIA

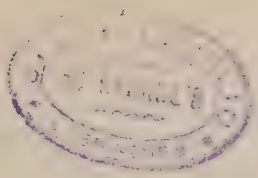
We are probably too close to the hour of his death, and even to the chief events of his life, to be able to offer an impartial and complete appreciation of the character and career of the late Lord Balfour. Friends who write about him are labouring under the sense of a great personal loss, and they will inevitably be led to use language about their subject that must appear, to those who did not know him, to be partial and even extravagant in his praise. Others, to whom he was but a great public figure of long outstanding celebrity, but whose access to his personality was no nearer than that supplied by his published works and the daily record of his political life of over half a century, may write of him, and of the great part that he played in the history of our country, with sterner impartiality ; but still without yet possessing the knowledge and perspective that the passage of years and the publication of his biography will provide. We must wait, therefore, for a long time, and until the archives of the Cabinet and of the Imperial Committee of Defence are accessible to the public, to know the whole worth and estimate that history is

likely to ascribe to the name and fame of Arthur James Balfour.

But whilst waiting for that verdict, which most of us who loved and served him will never see, it may perhaps assist the historian of the future, though in small degree, to have at his side the records of those who had exceptional opportunities of observing the character and of enjoying the intimate friendship of that remarkable and endearing personality. Such a record is mine—limited to the last half of his life and to the personal aspect of my subject, rather than to those philosophic and political sides of him with which abler and more impartial pens than mine will have to deal.

AN EARLY PORTRAIT

1890-1906



AN EARLY PORTRAIT

1890–1906

THROUGH the mist of years, I see him first at Gosford, Lord Wemyss' home in East Lothian, somewhere about the year 1890, when he was at the zenith of his fame as Chief Secretary for Ireland in Lord Salisbury's government. He was already my hero, carrying his life in his hands in Ireland, and his reputation in his head and heart as he confronted a violently hostile Opposition in the House of Commons. Yet all this time he was serenity itself; playing golf at North Berwick and elsewhere, encompassed by an unseen army of detectives in the day-time and listening to music, in the society of brilliant and accomplished men and women, at night. Many of these were "the Souls" of that day, and he was their star; I should never say that he was exactly one of them, any more than he was one of us "Hooligans" with whom he delighted to associate in the House of Commons ten years later; but he was their bosom friend, loved to be with them, and inspired them all. Among those who were not "Souls" was the Master of Balliol (Dr. Jowett) and, even now, I can well remember A. J. B.'s astonishment when the Master

announced that he had been to bull-fights in Spain and to prize-fights in England " because they were the sport of the country." This statement seemed to shock Balfour very much at the time ; any association with physical pain was then, as always, repugnant to him. I little thought that, thirty years later, he and I would be going, during the throes of the Peace Conference, to see the famous prize-fight between Carpentier and Dick Smith at the Cirque de Paris. He was determined to see it and so, eluding all detectives and reporters, we went. I cannot say that I think he enjoyed it ; but it interested him intensely, as he sat next to a stout little Yorkshireman who explained to him the points about each round as it proceeded. But I am anticipating.

A few years later (1895) I got into Parliament and, partly through A. J. B.'s good offices, became an assistant private secretary to Lord Salisbury at the Foreign Office. In that capacity I was brought into closer contact with Mr. Balfour in the House of Commons and also at Hatfield, where I had ample opportunity of observing and admiring his powers of concentration, his urbane dexterity in debate, his tenacity of purpose and his charm. This was before the days when there were serious divisions in the Unionist household. I think that history will probably record that, whereas A. J. B. seldom or never reaped anything but victory from his encounters with his opponents across the floor

of the House, his only defeats—and they were heavy ones—were engineered by members of his own party.[1] By that time (1895-1900), the sobriquet of " Fanny," bestowed upon him I think originally by Mr. Swift McNeill in allusion to his delicate appearance, had been completely forgotten ; its successor, " bloody Balfour," had long been buried by the Irish themselves under the mass of beneficent legislation that he had left in Ireland ; and now " Toby " of *Punch*, a personal friend although a mild opponent in politics, had given him the title of " Prince Arthur," the best and the last nickname that was attached to him in public life.

During those years we went twice together, in a party, to Bayreuth for the Wagner Festivals which interested him very much, as did his first meetings with Frau Cosima Wagner (who only outlived him by a few days) at the Villa Wahnfried. We went for many long bicycle rides in the forest before the performances and discussed Wagner's music in every aspect. I was young and an enthusiast ; he was of an older school and left upon me the impression that he did not really care for any of the " Master's " later works (which were then considered " advanced ") either from the story point of view or its musical presentation, and that he had a positive and personal dislike of the rôle of " that tiresome old gossip Wotan."

[1] " I was not afraid of the Opposition ; I was afraid of my friends."—A. J. B., Newcastle, Nov. 1905.

At the beginning of the next Parliament (1900-1905) A. J. B. often took charge at the Foreign Office, during the Boer War and the failing health of Lord Salisbury, and immediately made himself felt as a Foreign Minister (though *ad interim*) of a high order. I remember that Mr. Alfred Rothschild, who was very nervous at certain periods of the war and who used to pay almost daily visits to A. J. B., frequently told me that a talk with Balfour during the dark days through which we passed was a better nerve tonic to him than all the doctor's prescriptions. And in the same way, his invincible belief in the cause and in the courage of his fellow-countrymen, and his imperturbable serenity in the face of malignant opposition and invective, was of the utmost value to the morale of those who were fighting England's battle at home and abroad. But I think that this exhibition of almost superhuman self-restraint and optimism, together with his tremendous responsibilities for our Foreign Affairs during the same period, maimed his own morale (though he would have been the last to admit it) and left him a very tired man to deal with the Fiscal controversy which immediately followed his accession to the Premiership and cleft his party from top to bottom. Of that party he was supremely proud ; and other writers upon the history of those years will be able to point without difficulty to the tremendous efforts which Balfour made to keep it united in the face of Europe, even

at the risk of being himself misunderstood as regards the Tariff issue.[1] But let nobody suppose that that fissure in the party, that secession of old personal friends and political colleagues, which preceded the debacle of 1906, was not gall and wormwood to his soul. Yet I never heard him regret the course that he had taken. It was only one of many examples in his long career where, having examined a given case with all the intellectual care and political insight of which he was capable, and having come to a deliberate decision as to the right course to be adopted, he pursued that course however great the cost of the loss of personal friendship or of public position might be. It was also an illustration of another strong trait in his character which I observed over and over again ; a sportsman-like trait that one could not help admiring. When he had argued and fought for a cause with the whole force of his intellect, and when he was beaten either by friend or foe, he accepted defeat without rancour or demur. I remember another example (twenty years later) of this suppression of self, on the occasion when the Unionist party acquiesced in the division of Ireland against which he had fought during all his life. I asked him why, as a member of the Cabinet, he

[1] It is my firm conviction that he delayed the General Election, for which Mr. Chamberlain was so anxious, because he was so keen, between 1902-5, to build up the Anglo-Japanese and the Anglo-French Ententes on firm foundations, believing them to be of more vital importance to the country than Tariff Reform.

had consented to the reversal of his life-long policy. He replied that he had done his best but that the Cabinet was against him. "Then why did you not resign?" I enquired. "For two reasons," he replied: "In the first place I am a staunch upholder of the doctrine of a United Cabinet in matters of great moment. And, secondly, I was told (though I don't believe a word of it) that the Government would fall if I resigned and I was not prepared to incur that responsibility, even at the risk of losing my credit for consistency."

IN OPPOSITION

1906-1911

IN OPPOSITION

1906–1911

From 1906-10 I saw little of A. J. B., except in social life; for I was then out of Parliament, and much engaged with political work in Ireland. But we did find time to play some lawn tennis, to hear some concerts and to go up to Lord's pretty often during those years. In this connection I can never forget the magnificent finish of the Eton and Harrow match in Fowler's year when, at the close of play, A. J. B., Walter Forbes, Alfred Lyttelton and two of his brothers, all leapt on to the green bench upon which we had been sitting in the Pavilion and waved their hats and cheered Eton in an abandonment of enthusiasm. I notice the expression, in many references to A. J. B., of a very legitimate doubt as to whether he was or was not a keen Etonian. So far as my own observation goes, I should say that, as a place of sound learning, he thought Eton as hopeless as any other public school; though he once qualified that view by telling me that, even if it taught one nothing, Eton prepared a boy to learn anything. But he still thought it "the best of schools" (as the Boating Song avers)

and when it came to a triumph over Harrow, as on the occasion I have mentioned, there were no bounds to his exultation.

I have said that we were not brought much together during those years ; but, from afar, one saw him—the rejected of Manchester, the arch-suspect of the Tariff Reform party—gradually increasing in political stature until he towered once more, by grace of character, courage and experience, over the heads of all Ministers and ex-Ministers at Westminster. The great historic battles over Education and Licensing and the famous Budget of 1909 were fought by him with consummate skill, and bravely was he supported by his handful of followers in the House of Commons. Then came the two Elections in 1910 on the question of the House of Lords, and a narrow improvement in the numerical position of the Conservative party in the House of Commons, through the arrival of a number of sincere, strong-willed men who made no secret of their belief that the Unionists could never come into their own again until Balfour was driven out. And driven out he was—" the greatest Parliamentary figure of our time " as his successor Mr. Bonar Law called him a few days later. With as little ceremony or gratitude as Wilhelm II exhibited toward Prince Bismarck, the Unionists of England dropped their pilot ; and the greater light, who had ruled the day during a longer period of continuous leadership than any statesman since Pitt,

was (temporarily) eclipsed by the lesser lights who undertook to rule the night of the Conservative party. Yet, often as I have seen him cheered to the echo within the walls of Westminster, I can honestly say that I never heard a more unanimous or resounding welcome given to any statesman than that which was accorded to him on the first occasion that he appeared in the House of Commons after his resignation in November 1911. It was, indeed, a vote of censure upon the campaign of merciless intrigue that had dethroned him. *Resurgat.*

OUR LEADER

OUR LEADER

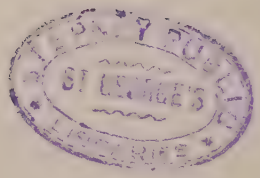
In the House of Commons there are two leaders, each with his own tale of duties and responsibilities. The Leader of the House is burdened with the whole conduct of business in addition to the management of whatever department of State he may have chosen to direct. The Leader of the Opposition, whose duty it is to oppose, has the heavy charges of keeping his party well in hand and of seeing that their criticism of the Government of the day is conducted on broad national lines and that it does not descend to the petty irritation of the camarilla or the mosquito. In both of these leaders an essential of success (that is, of party loyalty) is the same quality as that of a master of hounds : namely, the ability to show the field good sport—the metaphor was found by Lord Randolph Churchill.

Arthur Balfour, whatever may have been his failings, never, during his first decade of leadership, failed in this attribute of a leader. His immediate predecessors, Sir Stafford Northcote, Mr. W. H. Smith, and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, with all their sterling qualities, did not possess the temperament

to fuse a party into that condition of confidence which would compel it to go anywhere and do anything at the bidding of its leader. A. J. B. was fortunate in that he had exhibited whilst in Ireland all those qualities that men most value and envy ; he could therefore command, in the more peaceful precincts of Parliament, the cheerful and enthusiastic adhesion of the party over which he was called upon (in 1891) to assume control. So great was his success during those years of novitiate that, when the Conservatives came into power in 1895 he was the only candidate for the post of Leader of the House. During the next five years, sport was frequent and good, and the House was justified of its Master, who, to be perfectly fair, had nothing very serious to compete against. Sir William Harcourt was too unwieldy and of too uncertain a temper to be really formidable ; Mr. John Morley, with the stern grey banner of the doctrinaire, could count on but little support ; Sir Charles Dilke, a man of encyclopaedic knowledge scientifically classified, was too omniscient to be popular. There was only one figure that stood out from the corner of the second bench below the gangway, militant and effective, to do battle against A. J. B. and all his works. It was the figure of Mr. Lloyd George ; but his day had not yet come.

One cannot say that the Opposition in the 1895 Parliament was of a quality sufficiently stern to call forth the full powers of a great Leader of the House.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE FOREIGN SECRETARY
PARIS 1919



But it was sufficient to impress us young men of the Conservative party—and we were many new Members in that House—with the outstanding personality of the man who had been chosen to rule over us. And he won this supremacy from our suffrages almost in spite of ourselves. Even at our age—about twenty-seven, I suppose—we were aghast at the halting nature of his official statements in the House ; they seemed so ill-prepared, so tiresome to the speaker himself. And when he approached statistics his lapses were positively alarming at times : " Did I say *thousands* ? Oh, I meant *millions* " ; and then calmly, to our consternation, " But that makes no difference to my argument." And the curious thing was that it did make no difference to the foundation of his conviction ; for he was always speaking (as we were to live to find out) for or against some principle of theory or action to which the accuracy of figures was only of secondary importance. But, all the same, it did diminish at the time the pleasure with which the House heard him, especially those who had been brought up in the terminological exactitudes of Old Morality and Black Michael.[1] Yet these things were all forgotten and forgiven on the occasions when we could participate in the joy of watching the grace and lightning rapidity of his thrust and parry in debate, or the skill with which he would suddenly change the whole disposition of

[1] W. H. Smith and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach.

his argument and travel across a quite unexpected line of country, knowing that the enemy guns had been carefully trained and manned to meet a more usual avenue of attack. These brilliant intellectual manœuvres were a source of unfailing joy to the House of Commons of that day, except perhaps to the veteran Cromwellian (or " Plantagenet," as he once described himself) Sir William Harcourt, whose heavy artillery was too immobile to deal adequately with them. I must repeat that whilst most of the " big guns " of the Opposition of that day, Harcourt and Morley and Fowler and Grey, could beat Arthur Balfour in statement, Lloyd George was the only possessor of guns of sufficiently light calibre to give him battle on his own grounds of debate.

But a change came, and one must recognise it, when it was the turn of the Unionist party to be divided against itself, when leaders fell away from their old Chief and the rank and file of that once solid organisation formed themselves into opposing camps on the Tariff issue. Then, although, for grave reasons which have been already indicated, A. J. B. decided not to go to a General Election, the parliamentary weapons of which he was so supreme a master lost their efficacy, and he had no others by which to replace them. It may be said with truth that, by his conduct in Parliament between 1903-1906, he consolidated the position of Great Britain in the region of international affairs ;

but it is also true, I think, that during the same period he lost and never regained the whole-hearted parliamentary allegiance of the party that he had led for so long.

The historians of the future will decide whether A. J. B. was right or wrong in postponing that General Election. One thing is certain—that when it did take place, in 1906, the Unionist party suffered a defeat from which it has not yet recovered, even though there have been two short Unionist administrations since that date. Is it so certain, as A. J. B. seems to have calculated, that the Anglo-Japanese and the Anglo-French negotiations would have been in jeopardy if the election had taken place in 1903 and if the Unionist party had been beaten on the question of Tariff Reform, as appeared to be probable? Or would the result have been more favourable to that party if its leader, instead of trying to hold the party together for other reasons, had never written that "half sheet of notepaper" indicating a middle course and had resigned his leadership, leaving the Duke of Devonshire or Mr. Chamberlain to succeed where he had failed? Or again: would the solidarity of the party, and the ultimate cause of Tariff Reform, have been better served if Mr. Chamberlain had realised in time that, with an organisation hopelessly divided and menacing proscription on one side and on the other, no cause could hope to prevail? Such questions would arouse but an

academic interest a quarter of a century afterwards, were it not for an energetic movement in favour of a reform of the tariff which is taking shape to-day. Curiously enough, that is a subject which, since the days of the repeal of the Corn Laws, has always presented dangers to and has weakened the Conservative party, a misfortune which Arthur Balfour did his utmost to minimise or avert.

A SURVEY

A SURVEY

At this point (1911) it may be convenient to sum up Mr. Balfour's position in England at the age of sixty-three. The political generation of that day remembered him, perhaps only faintly, as the man who, above all others, had stood up to the giant Gladstone in the far off years of the first Home Rule Bill, and whose statesmanship and personal courage had brought something like order and peace and prosperity to Ireland during the period that he was Chief Secretary. Then, more vividly, they remembered his speeches during the Boer War, his Education Bill, and his share in the negotiation of the Anglo-Japanese treaty in 1902 and in the construction of the Anglo-French Entente of 1904. They sympathised with him, even if they did not support him when, as was wittily said, he "nailed his colours to the fence" on the Tariff Reform question; and they grieved, independent of party, when those personal colours went down flying at the General Election of 1906. For it was then realised that the absence of so experienced a Parliamentarian, so charming a personality, so clean a fighter and so keen a brain, was something like a bereavement to the Mother of Parliaments.

When he was returned, a few months later, as Member for the City of London, the House of Commons and the country greeted him with intense delight, a friendly and intellectual delight that it was his to arouse in every society until the end of his days.[1]

The academic world, in philosophy, letters and art, had long recognised him as an outstanding figure of intellectual culture. Before he was fifty years old, most of the great British Universities had given him their most prized degrees ; Wales, the United States, Cracow and Athens were to follow after. He had been elected President of the British Association, Chancellor of Edinburgh University, Lord Rector of both St. Andrews and Glasgow Universities, LL.D. of Cambridge and D.C.L. of Oxford Universities, a member of the Académie Française (*Sciences Morales et Politiques*) and the author of such works as *A Defence of Philosophic Doubt* and *The Foundations of Belief*—all of which combined to make him an eagerly sought correspondent or visitor to any seat of learning in the world.[2] In later years his Gifford

[1] John (Lord) Morley has drawn a somewhat superficial comparison between the characters of A. J. B. and Lord Halifax, the "Trimmer," as described by Macaulay : "His understanding keen, sceptical, inexhaustibly fertile in distinctions and objections, his taste refined, his sense of the ludicrous exquisite ; his temper placid and forgiving, but fastidious and by no means prone either to malevolence or to enthusiastic admiration."

[2] An unusual toll of honours awarded to a "brilliant amateur in philosophy," the surprising description of A. J. B. given by an old golfing friend in the *Quarterly Review* for April 1930.

Lectures and other scientific publications only added to the lustre of his already shining reputation.

It would not, I imagine, altogether surprise a student of A. J. B.'s character fifty years hence if he were told that this man of high Cabinet rank and of deep scientific attainments was, at the age of sixty, so much immersed in public affairs and intellectual pursuits that he had withdrawn himself entirely from the distractions of social life. Such, however, was far from being the case. The more serious preoccupations of his life almost seemed to require, for their fullest expression, the relaxation that could be gained from constant and congenial intercourse with his fellow-beings. I wonder whether it would be true to say that he was rarely intimate with any of them ; by which I mean that nobody, however close to him, except possibly his brother Gerald, was ever the repository of all that was passing through his mind. However that may be, and with this reservation, he had the magical gift of unconsciously evoking confidence and admiration from the young and old of both sexes, no matter what their nationalities or their pursuits. He was, during the years of which I am now writing, by far the most popular and desired member of London Society, and the competition was friendly but furious to secure him for an evening or a week-end. Which of us, who was privileged to move about in the great world of London Society in the spacious days before the Great War,

can forget the thrill of satisfaction with which we learned that A. J. B. was to be a guest at some dinner party or in some country house to which we had been invited ? He just made all the difference. And he was always just the same. No matter how much he had been harassed throughout a heavy week in Parliament, or concentrated for hours upon a scientific address, that elegant figure would present himself at the appointed hour (sometimes a little late) looking as though he had no care and no ambition except to give pleasure to and gain pleasure from those around him. Immediately he arrived, the atmosphere seemed to change for the better, like the appearance of the sun on an April day. Nothing and nobody could devitalise him ; he was never bored ; the spell of his charm, inexhaustible as radium, fell on the whole company and stayed there until the visit was over. And as we heard him talking with children, or bantering colleagues, or discussing letters or lawn-tennis with his neighbour, or carefully arguing some question of the day at a table surrounded by eager enquirers, we all felt that we were in the presence of a real Exquisite whose conversation was not inferior to that of Dr. Johnson. And what a listener ! It was rare indeed to leave any society in which A. J. B. had been present without hearing people say : " I thought he would be interested in what I had to tell him, and he was. He started the conversation himself, and you don't know

how clever he made me feel as I talked to him." And if anyone, Mr. Beverley Nichols for example, should ask, " Was he the same at home ? " the true answer is that he was. Indeed his radiant character shone nowhere more brilliantly than at Whittingehame, surrounded by his family. To them, to his country neighbours, to his tenant farmers and keepers and servants, he gave generously of his best ; entering into their joys and sorrows, their games and local interests with the same undisguised keenness and sympathy that made him beloved wherever he went. For all these reasons, and for many more and graver ones, he was the great social ornament of a London that admired brains and appreciated wit, elegance and charm. Then came the Great War, which changed much in the world, but very little in the fascinating character of Arthur Balfour.

AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE

1916-17

AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE

1916–17

It was not only Mr. Asquith, then Prime Minister, but the whole country who felt it essential that A. J. B., as the Elder Statesman of Great Britain, should be invited to take a seat in the first Coalition Cabinet. That he accepted goes without saying, for he had the highest possible instinct of duty to his country ; and he threw himself into his work with a courage and determination that could not be surpassed. But, being myself in France, Russia and elsewhere between 1914-1916, I scarcely saw him at all until the formation of the Lloyd-George Ministry in December, when I became his Parliamentary private secretary and worked under him at the Foreign Office until the end of the war and of the Peace Conference at Paris afterwards. Those were gloomy days indeed, for everybody ; but it was exactly at such crises that the imperturbable serenity and calm counsel of A. J. B. were of incalculable value to the Cabinet and the country. Probably better than anyone else he realised, with his ready access to every available source of information, the stress and

dangers of those eventful months ; the war, with its overwhelming risks and responsibilities was for ever in his thoughts ; he grieved over the terrible anguish and loss of life that clouded every home ; yet, whatever may have been the fears or the doubts that assailed him in the locked-up privacy of his inner consciousness, he never betrayed them by a word or a look to his colleagues or to the public. As for any personal danger that he might incur, he scorned it at the age of sixty-eight as he had done in Ireland when he was forty-two. There was a room on the ground-floor of the Foreign Office, padded and bomb-proof, ready for the occupants of that Department or of the Prime Minister during air-raids ; I do not think A. J. B. ever saw it. Certainly he never used it. But I can remember that on several occasions, when the warning had been given that the Germans were over London, and when men and women were flocking to that prepared asylum, A. J. B. picked up his hat and stick and wandered unconcernedly across the Horse Guards Parade to get on with his work at his home in Carlton Gardens.[1] " Fearless, resolved and negligently great."

It is a pity that the makers of books and newspaper articles about him at that time did not, perhaps could not, know or realise how incessantly

[1] " Nothing altered his seraphic equanimity ; nothing was allowed to interrupt the rhythmic harmonies of his life."—A French obituary notice.

hard was his work during those early months of 1917; when the Cabinet and the War Cabinet and Parliament were in almost perpetual session, when the presence of the Secretary of State was in constant demand at the Foreign Office for interviews and counsel, and when despatches and telegrams of vital importance to allies and to neutrals required and received his hourly attention. Those of us who were working near him at that time were amazed at the way in which his age and health stood the strain that they had to bear. We were thankful when Saturdays came and, by the united pressure of friends and colleagues, he was almost driven into the country to spend the week-end in search of fresh air and exercise. I can only recall one occasion, though of course there may have been others, when this rule of "Sundays off" was infringed by him—and with a lamentable result. Some pressing despatch or memorandum had to be written by the Chief which involved working at the Foreign Office on Sunday. He was the less disinclined to do this as he was curious to test the merits of a new dictaphone, which had just been placed in his room for use on occasions when he wished to work when his secretaries were away. The *modus operandi* of this strange instrument had been explained to him and he declared that he understood it perfectly. So, after luncheon, we went down to the Foreign Office to complete this urgent piece of work. He got comfortably seated

in his armchair, the mouthpiece of the machine was suitably adjusted, he did whatever was necessary to set the thing in motion, and there I left him dictating until close upon six o'clock when he called for me in the adjoining room to say that he had finished. The records were duly withdrawn and put in the typist's room, to be dealt with on the following morning when I hoped I should see the result of Sunday afternoon's labour (which had considerably exhausted him) in all the majesty of type. But, alas, the Chief had omitted to press some button, or to do whatever was essential to transmit the sound of the voice to the recording cylinders, which in consequence were " as good as new " on Monday, and there was no trace whatever of the important declarations that had been confided to them.

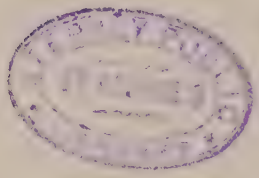
Fortunately a happier fate was in store for another despatch of even greater import—that of January 10, 1917—which contained Mr. Balfour's observations on the Allied Note and was addressed to our Ambassador at Washington. We are told that it deeply impressed President Wilson and his colleagues, and that it played no small part in persuading the United States to come over and help us.[1] However this may be, America joined in a couple of months later, and on April 11, in face of the new unlimited submarine warfare, A. J. B. and his War Mission started off for the New World.

[1] I am glad to possess the original draft of this document, written in the Chief's own hand upon scraps of paper of all sorts and sizes.

remainder. And but

neutrals happily protected by
British fleets or by their own
~~It was~~ from German

armies, should suppose themselves
safe from German methods,
the submarine has, within
its limits, rapidly imitated the
barbaric practice of the
Hun service. The War Steps
~~of~~ of the Central Powers are
~~The German Government~~ will content-
however
to ~~shock~~ the world, if at the
same time they can terrorise it



FIRST BALFOUR MISSION TO U.S.A.

April 1917

FIRST BALFOUR MISSION TO U.S.A.

April 1917

The main features of that important journey have been so often published that I do not propose to go over such well-trodden ground again. But there remain a few interesting details to be told which have as yet escaped the vigilant eye of the Press. For instance, when we reached Euston Station on that eventful morning, we only knew vaguely who our companions were going to be ; none of us had the remotest idea of the route we were to take, which was to be our port of embarkation, or upon what ship we were going to sail. Gradually, on the train, we " got together " ; a company of about twenty-five, including A. J. B., General Tom Bridges, Admiral De Chair, Lord Cunliffe, Eustace Percy, Alan Anderson, a number of minor luminaries representing various war departments, and the private secretaries, namely Eric Drummond, Cecil Dormer, Geoffrey Butler and myself.

All went " according to plan " until we reached Dumfries where, without a word of warning, we were unceremoniously turned out of our train and

hurried into the Station Hotel with the injunction that we were neither to be seen nor heard. It subsequently transpired that, at the last moment, the activities of German submarines off the North Coast of Ireland had attracted notice and our route was instantly changed. So at Dumfries we lay *perdus* for the night, wondering how long we were going to be kept there. About 8 p.m. on the following evening the order came to " entrain " at once—for another unknown destination. As we got into our " special," Eric Drummond heaved a sigh of relief and said to A. J. B. : " Thank goodness we are off without anyone finding out that you were there."

" What makes you think that ? " replied the Chief. " One person knew, anyhow."

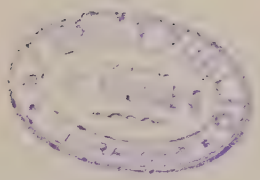
" Who on earth was that ? " I gasped.

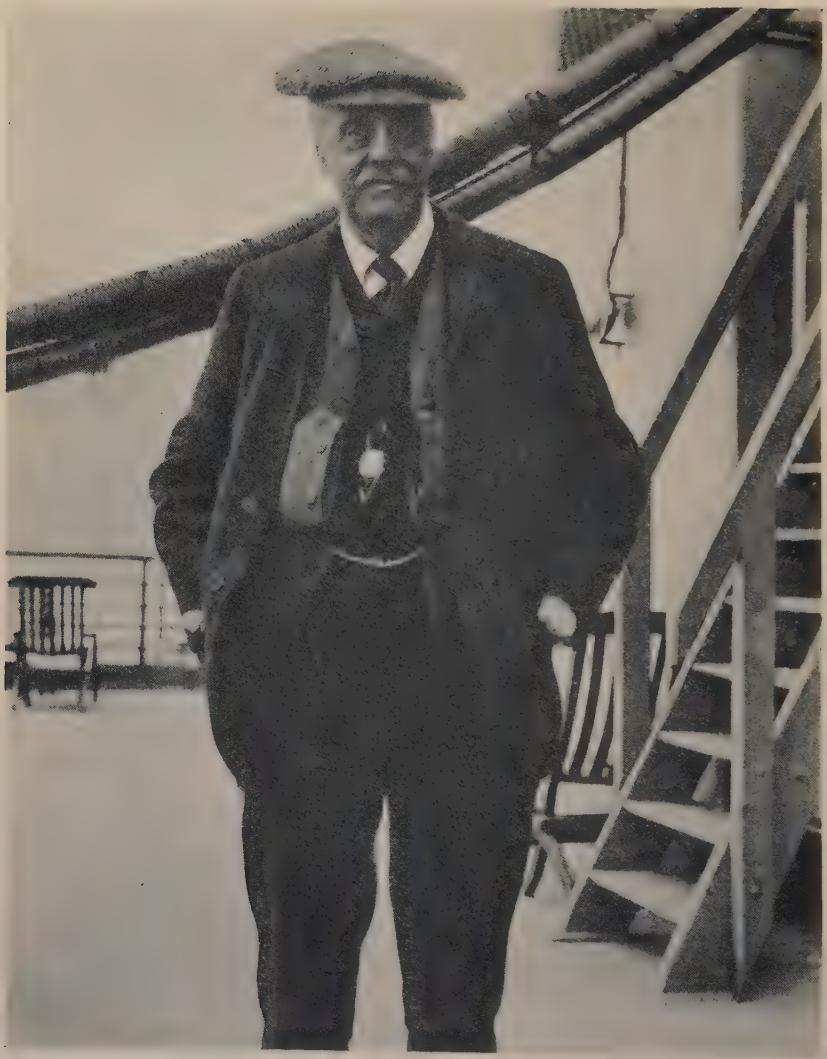
" My dear Ian, it was the lift-boy " (general consternation).

" How could he possibly have known ? " said someone.

To which, with his blandest smile, A. J. B. replied : " Well, it is quite simple : he brought his autograph book up to my room and I signed it."

Most fortunately no untoward sequel attended this exhibition of wayward humility—nothing could convince our Chief that it mattered what happened to him, or that anything could happen as a result of his personality being known—and near midnight we were embarked upon the *Olympic* off Greenock.





CROSSING THE ATLANTIC
1917

It was a weird experience mounting the companion ladder on a pitch-black night and groping our way into the enormous phantom ship that lay like a heavy shadow on the waters of the Clyde. It seemed to be almost as dark within as it was without; but a few discreetly shaded lamps disclosed hundreds of curious faces, scanning the new arrivals and cheering us to the echo. On the following day I asked one of the passengers (there were about 3000 of them proceeding to Canada), whom they thought they were greeting. He said they had been told that they were waiting to escort the Russian Royal Family to Montreal! Finally, we got under weigh, in a storm so heavy that our escort of destroyers could not face it and turned back before we reached the Irish coast; thence we proceeded to cross the Atlantic alone. For the first twenty-four hours A. J. B. did not appear at all, but lay on his sofa thinking and accommodating his nervous system to the lively motion of the ship. After that he never missed a meal with six or eight of his colleagues in his private dining-room, never failed to preside at the Mission conferences which were held regularly every morning and afternoon, never let a day pass without taking an hour's strenuous exercise in the ship's gymnasium. As for the dangers that surrounded us, he never gave them a moment's thought; he spurned a curious life-preserving one-piece suit made of india-rubber which had been thoughtfully provided and laid out

for him in his cabin, saying that on the whole he would prefer to drown in his night-shirt. No such alternative, however, presented itself, though we passed close to mine-fields and icebergs, through submarine scares, fogs and tempestuous weather ; at last, on a perfect morning, we steamed into Halifax harbour.

FIRST BALFOUR MISSION TO U.S.A.

FIRST BALFOUR MISSION TO U.S.A.

Continued

As the events of those stirring and historic days revive in my memory, I have to keep reminding myself that I am not writing a diary but am only trying to record my impressions of A. J. B., under the varied conditions that I saw him. Let us pass, therefore, directly from Halifax to Washington, D.C., in the company of a delightful deputation of important gentlemen who had been sent to the American frontier to meet the Chief and who, all of them, statesmen, pressmen and detectives, made fast friends with him in the course of the first few hours. He was radiantly happy ; to be on land again, and to be in a country and among a people for which he had always had great sympathy. True it was that he (or one of us secretaries) had forgotten to bring some document that he had written out and to which he wanted to refer : he only said : " What a bore it is that I have such a bad memory. I can't the least remember what I said about that subject. I shall have to re-think it over again." [1]

[1] " It is my good fortune to be a consistent thinker, and therefore I am never embarrassed or dismayed when previous utterances of mine are referred to."—A. J. B., April 11, 1908.

True, too, that during the night some ill-wishers tried to wreck the train. The news did not ruffle him in the least : " Quite like old days in Ireland," he remarked. And so, comfortably and uneventfully, we reached Washington and, from his reception at the station, we could gather the welcome that was awaiting the great British statesman.

A. J. B.'s success in Washington was immediate. I cannot help thinking that, from the President downwards, they were a little bit surprised at him ; he was not quite what they had expected. He was friendly, accessible and genial ; he made no effort to disguise his pleasure at being so warmly received nor of his intention to get to work as soon as they were ready. And for five weeks that work was one long ordered rush of Conferences, interviews, visits, receptions, speeches, luncheon and dinner engagements, with only very occasional leisure for a game of lawn-tennis or a drive into the surrounding country. I think that the gatherings which, perhaps, delighted the Chief most, and where he especially shone, were the men's dinner parties which he attended night after night to meet politicians and experts from all over the country. I can see him now, when dinner was over, lying back in a comfortable chair, with ten or a dozen men around him and plying him with every conceivable question about the war, advancing new theories, criticising old ones ; to all of them he listened with keen and unfeigned interest, and when

the catechism was over he would talk to them quietly for an hour, taking up every point, answering, illustrating—until they were both amazed at his knowledge and fascinated by his understanding. Those parties he always called the " Duma," and at them he got to know men and things under the most favourable and friendly conditions. I do not think it possible to over-estimate the advantage which our Mission gained for its objects by having that calibre of Chief sent to make friends with that particular country.

The only thing, if there was indeed anything, that was uncongenial to him, was the speech-making, which he never cared about except in the clash of debate or in academic circles. But in America he won through with it as with everything else, whether at Washington's tomb, at Chambers of Commerce, or on the floor of the Houses of Parliament. It will be remembered that the French Mission was there at the same time as ourselves,[1] and the effect of the late M. Viviani's electric oratory will not easily be forgotten. On one occasion he was speaking to some great meeting in Chicago and his speech roused old Maréchal Joffre to such a pitch of emotion that, at its conclusion, the man of war embraced the man of words

[1] During the following year in Paris Maréchal Joffre asked me to tell A. J. B. how much he had regretted that the French and British Missions had not been allowed to make their journeys together through the cities of the United States instead of, apparently, in competition with one another.

on both cheeks. I was reading an account of this demonstration to A. J. B. as we drove down to the Senate where he was to give an address. He listened . . . and then said solemnly : " Ian, whatever I say this morning or whatever I do, I count on you to prevent Tom Bridges from kissing me."

As in Washington, so in New York, he was overwhelmed with hospitality and overworked to the bone. But he never turned a hair ; not even when, after a day of speech-making, a public dinner and an official visit to the Opera, he found himself at an evening party, where, at two o'clock in the morning, a Doctor's degree of Columbia University was bestowed on him by Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler. It was in New York too that he saw several times, and for the last time, his old and great friend Mr. Choate whom he had not met since the latter was American Ambassador in London. They dined together one Saturday night, went together to the Cathedral on Sunday morning (when A. J. B. was invited to address the congregation from the pulpit, but declined) and parted after service, never to meet again, for Mr. Choate died that night.

The same afternoon we paid a visit to which the Chief had long looked forward, to ex-President Roosevelt at Oyster Bay. It was intended to be one of those " hush-hush " meetings which were not uncommon during the war ; partly because we were anxious to avoid any misunderstandings on the grounds of A. J. B. paying a call upon the

MR. BALFOUR AND MR. CHOATE DRIVING THROUGH
NEW YORK CITY
1917

most outstanding figure in America and an impatient critic of the present Government, and partly to indulge the Chief's passion for escaping notice from the public when he was bent on a private errand like the present. So the plan was kept quiet and we thought that only half a dozen people knew how A. J. B. was going to spend his afternoon. Imagine then our surprise when, on opening the front door to get into our car, and anticipating a quiet two hours' drive into the country, we found the courtyard blocked by seven plain clothes policemen on scarlet motor bicycles and, behind our car, three enormous vehicles crowded with thirty detectives. So much for privacy ! And the pace at which we were driven was enough to take one's breath away. It reminded me of a story which I told him at the time : of the new American " gadget " to be attached to powerful cars. It would show a blue light if you were running sixty miles an hour, a red light for seventy miles ; if that pace was exceeded, it played " Nearer my God to thee." Ultimately, with this enormous retinue, we reached the lovely spot on Sagamore Hill where stands the Roosevelt home overlooking Oyster Bay. There was the great man waiting at his front porch, smiling a broad welcome through gleaming spectacles, but a little bewildered by the number of his uninvited guests from the police department. " Say, boys," he shouted, " I didn't expect any of you. You'll get food somewhere in the village

I guess : good-bye." Then followed a long talk between the two statesmen, first in a long low library filled with trophies of the chase and other interesting souvenirs, then during a long ramble through the estate, and afterwards at supper which lasted till 10 p.m., when we took our departure. Seldom have I seen two men enjoy each other's company so much, or touch and adorn so many subjects in so short a time. The war and politics, philosophy and religion, farming and forestry, each had their turn, with lightning sketches of leading personalities on both sides of the Atlantic and innumerable reminiscences to illustrate and enliven the conversation. As we drove away from that memorable visit, A. J. B. said that, after two days' talk with Mr. Choate and that afternoon with Mr. Roosevelt, his feeling of growing fatigue had entirely left him and that he was now fresh and ready to continue and finish his work. That work, however, might have come to an untimely end, had it not been for the decisive intervention of our police escort. As we were proceeding in the darkness along a lonely road, a suspicious motor-car driven at full speed passed our guardian detectives and was evidently intending to hold-up the Chief. Quick as lightning our men accelerated ; one of their cars placed itself between us and the suspects who were then just ahead of us, and the other raced on and right-wheeled across the road in front of the would-be assailants who were

immediately boarded and arrested. It was a dangerous but brilliant piece of work. The whole affair was hushed up, and, as A. J. B. managed to catch the midnight mail to Washington, no harm was done.

How much I now wish that I had kept a full diary, instead of merely a skeleton day-book, of that eventful Mission to the U.S.A. Had I been thus properly equipped, I should have been able to record many more incidents and sayings illustrative of A. J. B.'s character and charm during our trans-Atlantic visit. It seemed to matter little where he went : to Richmond in Virginia or to Ottawa and Quebec in Canada ; whether the occasion was one of the daily war conferences in Washington, the award of an University honour, a mass meeting, a speech from the tail of a train or a private party, that indefinable something which was inherent in the presence of Arthur Balfour evoked the spirit of charity and calm in the hearts of all who came into contact with him. He seemed to fascinate them first and to fortify them afterwards. Even the Irish Nationalists, after their interviews with him (which were very much discouraged and only took place at his firmly expressed wish) professed themselves sorry that they were unable to persuade a gentleman whom, otherwise, they were delighted to have met. His was the undoubted gift of wearing the velvet glove with great distinction ; of exerting the persuasiveness of

a naturally gentle speech upon an audience of strangers ; of changing an atmosphere from hostility to friendliness by the exhibition of an inexhaustible patience that could listen with apparently deep interest to long soliloquies by an individual or to still longer addresses from societies that had hoped to disconcert him. His the unerring insight that never took offence, that understood phrases which might easily have been resented by others ; his the native kindliness that forgave [1] as readily as it forgot. And so he left the United States, as he left Canada afterwards, a figure of even greater stature than that which had arrived there five weeks before ; for he had made many rough places plain, had largely changed the attitude of the people of the United States towards England, and had gained for us (in all but name) an Ally whose sympathies sprang not only from the head but now from the heart.

[1] "I am quite unable to harbour resentment for long, because I always forget the reason why I was originally angry." Quoted from a French obituary notice.

LONDON AND PARIS

1917-18

LONDON AND PARIS

1917–18

The year that followed our return with the first Balfour Mission from the United States (June 1917-18) was one of intense labour and anxiety to our Chief at the Foreign Office, as indeed it was to the heads of all the other departments and to the country generally. I have no official records of that year by me, nor, if I had, would they find a fitting place in this slight Memoir which only claims to be an impression of a great personality. It is sufficient to say that during those twelve months such important matters as the reform of the Foreign Office and the "gingering-up" of the Admiralty, the attack on Lord Hardinge (who had become Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office on his return from India) for his share in the Mesopotamia *débâcle*, the appearance of Lord Lansdowne's famous Peace Letter, and a decided obtrusion of a sort of pacifism upon a wearied world, together with the everyday burdens of current responsibilities, kept A. J. B. fully occupied. Even at luncheon time at Carlton Gardens, there was no time for repose for his brain; for there were

generally five or six guests of note and of different nationalities discussing the birth of Zionism (which culminated in the famous Balfour Note of November 1917), the possibility of a League of Nations, the Austrian peace move, the development of new scientific inventions to assist the Allies, and other important subjects of immediate moment. It was during a long period of national peril like that through which we were then passing that the Chief worked at the highest pressure and gave of his very best ; real danger and difficulty stimulated him, as long ago in Ireland, to exhibit a maximum of courage and endurance, of purpose and decision which filled his colleagues and his friends with amazement and surprise. Nevertheless it was something of a rest and a change for him when he began to cross the Channel for secret conferences at various places with allied statesmen and generals early in 1918. These meetings were so necessary that eventually a Supreme War Council was set up with offices and staffs at the Hotel Trianon at Versailles, and from June onwards it was there that all information was pooled, all plans discussed, all diplomatic, military and naval dispositions taken for the successful prosecution of the war. As I say, A. J. B. generally attended these ; it was on one of the rough crossings which he then encountered that he replied sadly to Lloyd George, who confessed to his fear lest they might be sunk by a submarine, that he was always hoping they might

MR. BALFOUR AND FIELD-MARSHAL LORD HAIG IN THE GARDEN OF THE TRIANON HOTEL, VERSAILLES
1918

meet one to put an end to his sea-misery. He was not really such a poor sailor; but, and it was quite as bad, he was always afraid that he would be ill, and took all sorts of remedies which, if they staved off sea-sickness, generally incapacitated him for twenty-four hours afterwards.

The first Conference that A. J. B. went to at Versailles—" town meetings " Colonel House used to call them—was in June 1918, a glorious June with Paris looking its very best. Never, I suppose, were so many Prime Ministers, Foreign Secretaries, Commanders-in-Chief and Lord High Admirals gathered together within sound and within reach of the enemy's artillery both by day and night. But the Press was very conscientious and well-drilled; the presence of all these notables was never published, even though the keen-eyed journalists became quite accustomed to seeing General Foch and Colonel Weygand in their weather-beaten car racing in from the front, or Sir Douglas Haig and Henry Wilson walking from their Hotel, Signori Orlando and Sonnino chatting in a restaurant, Lloyd George and Clemenceau in close confabulation, and A. J. B., upright and silver-haired, sauntering through the parks after the day's work was done. Generally, for these conferences, the Chief used to stay with Lord Derby at the Embassy, and either Eric Drummond or I was with him. There were air-raids nearly every night at about 10.45 p.m., whilst we were sitting

in the garden after dinner. At the first "alarm" the butler used to come out and solemnly remove the one solitary lamp round which we were finishing our coffee, and with it he preceded our little procession into the house. The discussions at these close-tiled meetings have little or nothing to do with this Memoir ; but a few sidelights upon them may not be out of place for this (to me) interesting reason : that, at A. J. B.'s request, I had written a chapter to be incorporated in the Autobiography upon which he was engaged at the time of his death, concerning the outside and everyday sayings and doings of the various personages engaged in the Paris Peace Conferences in 1918 and 1919. That chapter will never be published.

THE SUPREME WAR COUNCIL

Versailles 1918

THE SUPREME WAR COUNCIL
VERSAILLES, 1918

I SUPPOSE that all international assemblies, both before and since the Congress of Vienna,[1] had their lighter as well as their graver aspects; it is probable that the conferences after Armageddon will not be very different. These were the details that A. J. B. asked me to try and remember for the entertainment of the readers of his "Life," if, though he sometimes doubted it, he lived to write it to the end. It is certain that for us all, and particularly for the Chief, these passing trivialities were like manna in a wilderness of work and, on that account, are perhaps worth recording. One story, for example, pleased him very much and he was fond of repeating it afterwards. It concerned a discussion, in secret conclave, as to which nation (if any) should have the honour of providing the Admiralissimo of the Allied Fleets in the Mediterranean. The debate occupied all one morning, and, when it broke up, I asked one of the foreign generals what conclusion had been arrived at. "None," he replied; "we are all at sea *except*

[1] "Le Congrès ne marche pas, il *danse*." (Prince de Ligne.)

the Italians," who were mischievously alleged to be anxious for the honour, on the grounds that whereas the French and English had lost a great many ships in the *Mare Clausum*, they had lost none or very few. It was just about the same time that we were told by an Italian general that his troops, earlier in the war, were hunting for a popular name for themselves—like the French "poilu," the British "Tommy" and the American "Sammy." The name they decided upon was "*I Terribili*." Of course, M. Clemenceau, who soon became a fast friend of A. J. B., was responsible for many good things that made the latter laugh. He came back one night from dinner where the "Tiger" told him that he had just offered an important diplomatic appointment to a distinguished political opponent. This gentleman, taken by surprise at so unusual an occurrence, asked for time to consult his friends. "How can you do that?" snapped the old Tiger. "I have put all your friends in gaol."

And how delighted he was by an amusing incident which occurred at the first of the Conferences to which our Dominion Premiers came. It was opened by a charming speech from M. Clemenceau. In the course of it he referred to the well-known story of King Louis XIV who, when a famous Doge of Venice visited him at Versailles, asked his illustrious guest, "What surprises you most in this surprising place?" The Doge replied, "The

most surprising thing is the fact that I am here." A very appropriate illustration of the feelings of our Prime Ministers from overseas : but, unfortunately, the speech lost something of its dignity in the process of translation, for the interpreter invariably pronounced the word Doge as " Dodger." It was at one of these historic meetings before the Peace Conference proper began that our wise old diplomatic friend, Jules Cambon, hearing that the " Big Five " had been seriously divided on the subject of the " Freedom of the Seas," said to A. J. B. : " Il me semble que nous sommes sortis du moment de danger pour entrer dans les heures des difficultés." And the *heures des difficultés* were not long in coming, although there were *moments de distraction* to assuage them.

The Chief's apartments during the nine months of the Peace Conference were on the second floor of a fine house in the rue Nitot, just above those occupied by the Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George. I never saw before, and shall certainly never see again, such companies of brilliant intellect and talent, drawn from many nations, as those that assembled round his table, day after day, for luncheon or dinner, or in the evening for music. Miss Megan Jones, Miss Ruth Draper, Mr. Amherst Webber were among the many who entertained us. I remember one evening, when Charles Mendl was going to sing, he enquired delicately whether anybody present objected to German songs. The

Chief promptly replied, " I don't ; I will take them as part of the Reparations that they owe us." And General Botha, who attended one of these *soirées*, told us a good story, apropos to educating " natives " above their station. He mentioned a Kaffir chief of his acquaintance whose five sons " lived principally upon Education and subscriptions." They began to give endless trouble in the district and became a source of grave anxiety to their father. He came to General Botha and said, " I wish you would hang one of them publicly and so save the four others."

AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE

Paris 1919

AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE
PARIS 1919

But I must return to the opening day of the Peace Conference at the Quai d'Orsay, and to the impressive spectacle of the long line of fourteen British representatives thereat . . . " one for each of our President's fourteen points," as a witty American remarked. It was then that Jules Cambon wandered up to A. J. B. and said, " Savez vous, Excellence, à quoi aboutiront ces Conférences ? . . . à une improvisation." Alas, it proved only too true ! After the ceremony was over, M. Clemenceau took A. J. B. off to the War Office for a talk. The former, wearing his well-known and rather ancient " bowler " hat, chaffed the latter upon his shining new " topper." The Chief mildly remonstrated, " I was told to wear it." " So was I," replied the Tiger. They went into his study for their conversation. On the writing table stood a charming little nude torso of a Greek female figure. The Tiger told A. J. B. that a lady had recently been to call on him and reproached him for not remembering her. " How can I forget you," he replied, pointing to the

statuette, " when I have this portrait always before me." She never returned.

During M. Clemenceau's illness, after his narrow escape from the assassin's bullet, A. J. B. often went to see him at his house in the rue Franklin, and reproached him boldly for being either a very bad patient or for having a very bad nurse who allowed him to do the most foolish things. " Not a word against my nurse," said Clemenceau ; " I am devoted to her and mean to marry her in the next world—which, by the way, is the only place for marriages." He treated his escape from death very lightly, saying that it proved his argument to his generals in favour of cold steel. " If only that idiot had run me through or stabbed me, I should have been dead to-day ; as it is, I am nearly well." He was perfectly fearless—except of colds in the head : one day he said whimsically to A. J. B. that he thought he would adopt the Jewish faith, for then he could wear his hat in church and avoid draughts.

If anything in connection with M. Clemenceau's illness could be called fortunate, it was that it coincided with President Wilson's temporary absence in the United States and with Mr. Lloyd George's departure for England to attend to parliamentary affairs. During that time there was a breathing space, and leisure for Colonel House and A. J. B. to reorganise the head-office of the Conference with a view to hurrying things on, and there was oppor-

tunity at last to accept some of the hospitality that was for ever being offered to the Chief. He went to the Opéra Comique, to many cinemas, to numberless dinner-parties and to music at Boni de Castellane's house, where Bishops and statesmen, generals and philosophers, assembled in a sixteenth century atmosphere to listen to seventeenth century music struggling against twentieth century conversation. It was at one of these delightful entertainments that we heard of the imminent return of President Wilson to Paris ; whereupon Paul Bourget said that, in honour of the event, he would ask the *Académie Française* to incorporate the word " *idéocrate* " into the French language. There too that A. J. B. observed to a distinguished French agnostic that " the French might well assert, as against the Americans, that *they* are the inhabitants of ' God's own country ' ; but their atheism deters them from making so ludicrous a claim." But it was at the first of the meetings of the " Big Four " which M. Clemenceau attended after his illness, and before the return of President Wilson and of Mr. Lloyd George, that A. J. B., then representing Great Britain, was paid a compliment that he always remembered with pleasure. M. Clemenceau came to meet him at the door of the Conference room and, taking him by the arm, said, " Gentlemen, let me introduce to you the Richelieu of the Congress." Somewhat taken aback, A. J. B. replied, " But what, then, may I call you, M. le Président ? "

" Call me your friend," said Clemenceau softly.

In due course " the Captains and the Kings " returned, and the Conference worked double time to make up for their absence. It was a period of thorny questions, incessant labour, frayed nerves and recurrent crises, sometimes of an acute character, which led the Emir Feisal to compare the Alliance to " a tent in the desert which blows away when the storm comes." [" *My* nerves are never frayed ; I don't get sufficiently excited by these meetings ; I suppose that is why I feel so ' out of it ' at a Conference like this," the Chief once said plaintively to me—he, " the Richelieu of the Congress ! "] But, luckily, the days grew longer ; and when we reached the middle of May, and Peace terms had been presented both to the Germans and the Austrians, there came another spell of comparatively slack time and the opportunity for exercise—golf and lawn-tennis—two or three times a week after working hours. One of our most amusing matches was played in reply to a challenge by two of the American delegates, Vance McCormack and Barney Baruch, who defied all pairs whose combined ages were not less than their own —which amounted to a total of seventy years. Greatly daring, A. J. B. accepted battle and led me into the fray with him. Our joint ages, I am sorry to say, came to 120 years, but we did not come off worst in the encounter. There was also time to spend week-ends in two or three delightful French

country houses where the Chief always felt rather nervous at first, because he said (modestly if untruly) that his French was " so bad that only an Englishman can understand it." Then there was the Eton dinner on the Fourth of June, at the Hotel Majestic, presided over by A. J. B. and attended by fifty-five Etonian members of the Conference ; it was so hilarious and prolonged that we all arrived very late for our meetings in the afternoon. And last, but by no means least, the admission of A. J. B. to the Foreign Membership of the *Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques*, which carries with it the honorary membership of the *Institut de France*. The proceedings, which were very informal (for France), took place in an old wainscoted room in the *Institut*, under the chairmanship of the President of the *Académie Française* who delivered a very cordial speech of welcome to the new member and handed to him the official medal. The Chief's carefully prepared reply had been brilliantly translated for him into French by M. Bergson, and was spoken in that language to the delight of everybody present. " Nous avons là une bonne acquisition " was the unanimous verdict of the forty venerable members, none of whom could remember any occasion upon which a foreigner had addressed them in their native tongue.

THE TREATY SIGNED

June 28, 1919

THE TREATY SIGNED

June 28, 1919

Then came the last week in June when we heard (June 24) that, under compulsion, the Germans would sign Peace terms, and Paris with the whole civilised world breathed one long deep sigh of relief. It was arranged that the great ceremony should take place at Versailles on June 28, which left only three days to make all the necessary preparations for so historic an event. Everybody was working at the highest pressure, far into the night ; but M. Clemenceau found time to invite President Wilson and A. J. B. to go down to Versailles with him and cast a supervising eye on the general arrangements. Whilst we were walking about, and the Tiger was shewing his guests the old Parliament building and the seat from which he made his first speech in 1871, he turned to President Wilson and asked if he thought ladies should be admitted to the signing of the Treaty. The President replied, " Well, my ladies are very much interested in this thing and they would like to see the ceremony." So Clemenceau acquiesced, and slily added : " There is another reason why ladies

should be invited. Mr. Balfour would not sign if there were no ladies present."

Duly dawned the day of June 28 and the signing of the Treaty, a thousand times described. With difficulty, when it was all over, we found our cars and returned to Paris in time for dinner, after which "the Richelieu of the Congress" (bare-headed and without any detectives or secret protection) sauntered with me through the brilliantly lighted streets of Paris, commenting on the day's proceedings and comparing them with the time when first he visited the capital of France. What was in his mind then, he spoke afterwards in 1922 at a public dinner in London :

> "I accompanied my Uncle, Lord Salisbury, when he went to Paris in the first train that entered the French capital after the Commune was defeated in 1871, only a few weeks after the King of Prussia had been declared Emperor of Germany in the Palace of Versailles. I went then in a humble capacity, when Germany had the unquestioned leadership of Europe ; and I have lived to sign on behalf of my country, as Foreign Minister, in that great gallery where the Emperor William first became Emperor, the Treaty of Versailles that ended the Empire to whose beginnings I have referred."

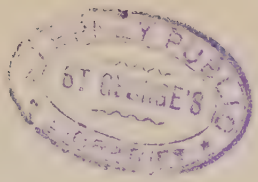
And here I will conclude the Paris section of this Memoir ; not because we left Paris, as most of the delegates did, directly after June 28, but because the signing by the Austrians and the Turks gave rise to little that is worth recording in a summary of

sidelights. In fact, we stayed on in Paris until September 12, exactly nine months after A. J. B. had returned from the South of France. Few people will know how incessantly he worked during that time, how great were his responsibilities, how marked his successes, how outstanding his serene personality at every Conference or meeting in which he was engaged. But these facts must not be overlooked by the reader, who may be led to imagine from the contents of these last pages that those nine months in Paris meant nothing but play.

I ought to add that just before A. J. B. finished his work in Paris he accepted the Chancellorship of Cambridge University, an office in which he delighted and of which he was, I think, prouder than of any post that he occupied or of any honour that was bestowed upon him during nearly sixty years of public service to his country.

THE LAST PHASE

1920-1930



THE LAST PHASE

1920–1930

" I GAVE up the leadership of the party to which I had the honour to belong in 1911, and I had then assumed that, for the remainder of my life, I might take part in the House of Commons work—and that I was not severed altogether from public affairs. But *I never contemplated the possibility of my returning in any capacity to the front line of working politicians*. Nor should I have done so, had it not been for the outbreak of the Great War. I again felt I had no choice but to return to active—indeed most laborious—public life, first as the Head of the Admiralty and then as head of the Foreign Office.

" Then there was the Armistice. For nine months after that I was over in Paris, dealing with the Peace of Versailles, and since then no inconsiderable fraction of every year has had to be spent out of this country in connection with the League of Nations work. Last but not least the Washington Conference which lasted more than three months."

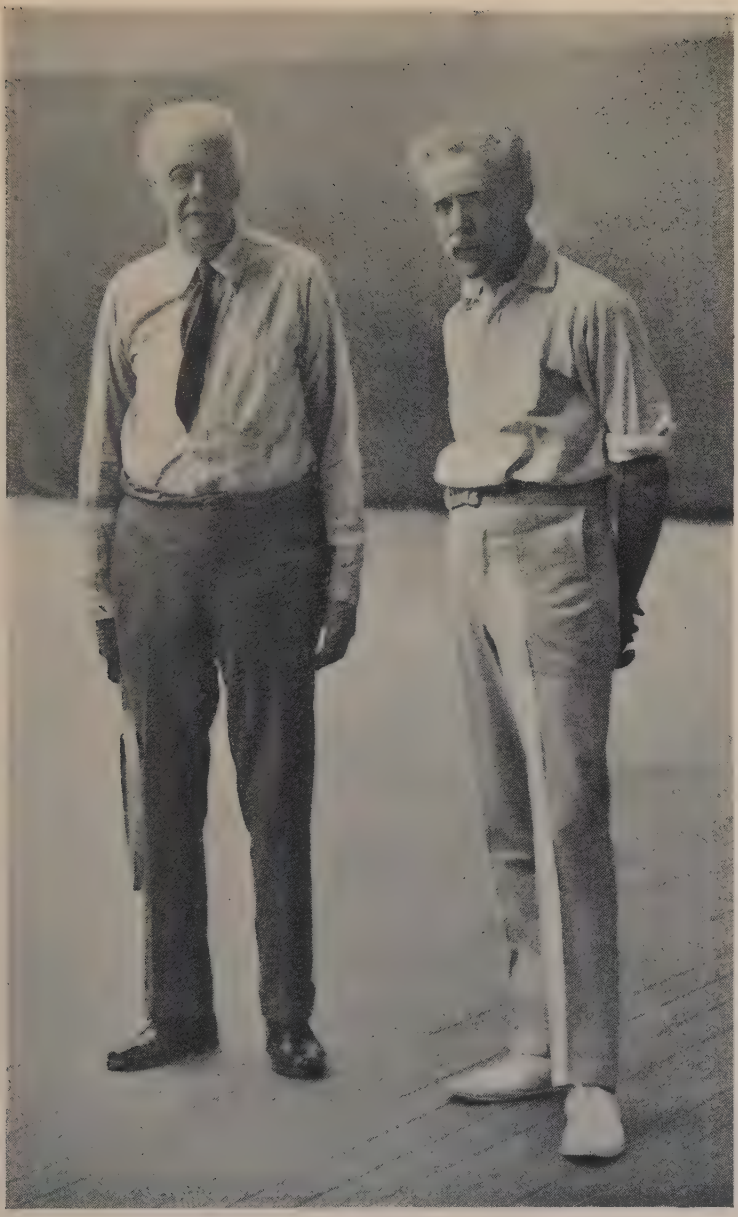
Thus spoke my old Chief to his own tenantry on November 17, 1922, in replying to " An address

commemorating Lord Balfour's services at the Washington Conference and his elevation to the Peerage."

" I never contemplated returning in any capacity to the front line of working politicians." The trusted pilot of the Unionist party, who had been " dropped " in 1911 at the age of sixty-three, was called to the bridge again by the united voices of all parties in 1915 when the ship of State was in danger ; and there he stayed at the captain's side, with one short interval, until 1928 when he was eighty years old. I have seen journalistic snapshots of A. J. B. which described him as jealous for power and retentive of high office in the State. Nothing could be further from the truth. Born with a grave sense of social service, he entered Parliament, instead of devoting his life to that scientific research for which he felt himself most fitted. That Parliament he adorned for forty-eight years, as an elected representative of the people, and for ten years more as a member of the Second Chamber ; yet, across all that span of time, no reasonable person can conscientiously say or think that Arthur Balfour stood in any man's way or grasped at power that was not freely offered to him. On the contrary, there were to my certain knowledge, many weary moments in his latter years when he would have given much to retire into private life, to live among his own folk at Whittingehame and to write, as he once told me

after Paris, three or four books that he thought ought to be written. In the passage above quoted, he explains to his friends at home the public reasons that frustrated his hopes, and reminds us that, although he had exchanged the office of Foreign Secretary for that of President of the Council, he had very little leisure that he could properly call his own. He was, from 1920 onwards, a chief architect of the League of Nations, investing its early councils at Geneva with a dignity and knowledge possessed by no other living man ; he was the foremost champion of Zionism, a social and political system which he defended with intense conviction ; he was the centre and the core of the Washington Conference in 1922 where the culminating success of a long and brilliant public career brought him, to his bewilderment, the highest honours that his Sovereign could bestow—a Peerage and the Order of the Garter. I feel sure that if such dazzling recognition of his services had been, could have been, suggested to him from any other source than from His Majesty himself, he would have respectfully and gratefully declined it ; for he would have preferred, personally, to die as he had lived for so long, without changing either his name of Mr. Arthur Balfour or the House of Parliament in which he had sat from early manhood. But this double gift from his King was so graciously and spontaneously bestowed, in a letter which reached him on his arrival at Waterloo

Station from America, that no thought of personal preference swayed him for one moment ; and so after a few weeks of being " Sir Arthur," in virtue of his Knighthood of the Garter, he took his seat as Earl of Balfour in the House of Lords. From that time onward I saw nothing of him " officially," though we were constantly meeting either at his own house or elsewhere. But one could not help being amazed at his untiring intellectual activity. We heard of him drafting for the Cabinet Memoranda or despatches which his colleagues acclaimed as masterpieces, one of them as late as 1928 ; we read his historic speeches on occasions and subjects so widely different as those at the opening of a Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 1925 and at the Imperial Conference in 1926. We knew, through the columns of the Press, of his important contributions in 1926 and 1927 to the work of that Civil Research Committee and of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research of which the Lord President of the Council is the appointed chief ; besides which, in the first half of 1927, he delivered addresses on the lives and achievements of such varied personalities as Lord Bacon, Newton, Faraday, Beethoven, Pasteur and Lister, to say nothing of having composed between-whiles a striking introduction to a new edition of Bagehot's *English Constitution.* And with it all, he made time to see his friends at luncheon and dinner or at week-end parties ; he played Lawn Tennis regularly in



MR. BALFOUR AND THE AUTHOR
1919

London or at Cannes, where he was as well-known and as popular a figure on the courts as he was in the Committee box at Wimbledon.[1]

But then, towards the end of 1928 I think, the strong intellect and the frail body, that had never spared themselves in the service of the country or in the society of his friends, began to weaken and wear until the labourer of a long life-time was compelled to put off his armour and wait patiently until the end which was not far off. And patiently and serenely he waited, with unflinching courage and without complaint. I saw him several times in his last illness at Woking, finding him tired, but affectionate as ever and always interested in the news that I could bring him from abroad. And occasionally, too, he saw other old friends and old colleagues to whom, on his "good days," he could talk and listen brilliantly, though only for a short time. From them I heard of their wonderment that he still seemed to keep so strong a grip and interest upon all that was going on in this changing world that he had known for so long. At last the end came on the morning of March 19; and the weary warrior, the beloved Chief, the Prince of friends, was called to the Rest which he had so richly earned.

[1] I have just returned from Cannes where the proprietor of the Beau Site Hotel, in which A. J. B. passed so many pleasant winter weeks during the latter part of his life, tells me that he proposes to fix a memorial tablet beneath the Chief's windows and to lay out a modest *parterre* in a wild garden on a hill top above the hotel, where he often used to work in solitude.

DEEDS AND WORDS

DEEDS AND WORDS

"I HAVE fought a good fight; I have finished my course." [1] On the tombstone of my memory of A. J. B. I have inscribed these words which an earlier soldier-saint in great causes spoke of himself. To those of us who loved him, and we were many, it is our sole consolation—and that a small one—that his life's work was over, and remained only to be appraised by the generations for whom it was achieved. But his passing has left a mighty void in our hearts, with an ache that cannot quickly pass away. In that great example of knightly chivalry, of loyalty and magnanimity, of splendid courage and uncomplaining patience, of public duty and faithful friendship, we have our great reward for the deep devotion and the small services that we were able to give him. I ask for the reader's gentle tolerance when I say, with a partiality which I have not attempted to disguise, that I see no man in the public life of the present day who can fill his place. It is not impossible that, in the rush and change of this restless post-war world, there is no place for exactly the com-

[1] See II Timothy; ch. iv, v. 7.

bination of qualities which made A. J. B. so conspicuous and gracious a figure during the long course of his life. The weapons of war, the order of battle against the social evils and external perils which he combated, may now be considered antiquated ; it may be argued that those perils and evils have themselves changed in nature and extent, involving the necessity of a new disposition of the forces for good which are the backbone and the bulwark of our country. Be it so ; but our great Generals in this more modern warfare, and I know that great men will surely be forthcoming, will be well advised to deepen their faith in the Imperial mission of the British Empire at home and abroad, and to enrich their intellectual armoury for its propagation, by an intensive study of the life and labours of Arthur Balfour.

That study will do more than many volumes of biographical essays to clear away the cobwebs of misunderstanding and even of caricature that have already gathered round his reputation. He should be judged, I think, more by his life in action and by his published works than by his speeches in Parliament or on the platform. That is, perhaps, the advice which he himself would have given ; for in his short prefatory note to *Opinions and Arguments* he says :

" My memory, especially my verbal memory, is hopelessly defective. For good, therefore, or for evil, the wording of my speeches is of necessity unprepared. Few,

indeed, are those who, in such conditions, can speak as they would write ; and certainly I am not one of them. If it be asked whether the defect in extempore speech could not be cured by subsequent correction, I reply that it certainly could ; but that it would be far more trouble to make the corrections than to make the speech."

For the very reasons which he gives above, his uncorrected speeches, whether in Hansard or the Press or in pamphlet form, have constantly been open to misinterpretations and to discussion as to their real meaning. And here came in his real penance for idleness, if indeed it can be called idleness : " I am more or less happy," the Chief once said, " when being praised : not very uncomfortable when being abused, but I have moments of uneasiness when being explained." That uneasiness not infrequently assailed him when his friends in the Commons or in the columns of the Press undertook to interpret his speeches.

If then, as I suggest, the statesman or the historian of the future be content to judge A. J. B. by his life in action, as represented in State Papers, and by his published works on philosophy and a score of other subjects, he will get very close to the real man. He will at once brush aside the absurd charges occasionally brought against Mr. Balfour : charges of indolence—for what output has been comparable with his during the past sixty years ? of " agnosticism " (or of some other fantastic form of belief or unbelief), for he will have read *In*

Defence of Philosophic Doubt, *The Foundations of Belief* and the Gifford Lectures on *Theism and Humanism* delivered at Glasgow University in 1914, and will have come to a very different conclusion as to Arthur Balfour's religious convictions; of "purely negative intellectual activity" as a Statesman, after a close perusal of papers dealing with the birth of the Committee of Imperial Defence, the invention of the Imperial Conferences, and with the immense results that followed his success in stimulating the work of scientific research when he was President of the Council. And if this same student of the affairs of the past thirty years should think it not beneath his notice to examine the accusation that A. J. B.'s "self-interest" was responsible for some of his greatest efforts, he will find a complete refutation in the Chief's generous despatches reporting the results of his two Missions to the United States, wherein he associated every one of his colleagues with the successes ascribed to himself alone; of his nine months' labour in Paris, for which Mr. Lloyd George was given all the credit; and he will find the most magnanimous utterance of all, perhaps, in the archives of the Birmingham Corporation which contain the account of his admission to the Freedom of that city in 1922. In returning thanks for the honour conferred upon him, there was not a word of reference to himself; the speech was one long and generous eulogy upon the public life of his old colleague

Joseph Chamberlain, whose Tariff Reform policy had destroyed his Cabinet in 1903 and ultimately led to A. J. B.'s resignation as leader of the Unionist party. No; "self-interest" was as foreign to his personal conception of public duty as it was to his view of the high mission of the British Empire. Had it been otherwise, and had he allowed self-interest to be the guiding factor in his choice of a career, he would never have crossed the threshold of the House of Commons; he would never have been Prime Minister of England.

LEISURE

LEISURE

I SHALL promise to tax my readers' patience but for a very few moments in giving my impressions of A. J. B.'s most favoured ways of spending those rare moments of leisure which were not devoted to the service of the State. Intellectually, of course, he gave the first place to reading omnivorously and to writing. His library and bedroom were always littered with open books by half-a-dozen different authors, from the latest work on philosophy to the best detective story. (Lady Frances Balfour reminds us, in "*Ne Obliviscaris*," that during a short holiday at Whittingehame, in the middle of the Tariff Reform crises in 1903, he returned from the New Club, Edinburgh, and proclaimed to his family the "good news" . . . that Sherlock Holmes had written a new story.) And he really loved writing his books and articles upon the subjects that he had made his own: "What pleases me most," he told Lord Riddell, "is to write something quietly by myself—to touch it up and to complete it with a feeling that one has done one's best." I have often heard him say the same thing; and his long-suffering personal amanuenses will bear

witness to the amount of rewriting, correcting, polishing and touching up that tortured his every type-script before the final copy was sent off to the printer. That phrase, " to write something quietly by myself," reminds me of one of his habits upon which the public commented and which occasionally annoyed his colleagues. It was that of staying in bed late in the morning. Some supposed that this was a form of laziness ; others that it was necessary to rest his back, and I know not what else. But, in reality, it was none of these things. It was the overwhelming desire for a period of undisturbed solitude during some period of every day which he declared was " good for the soul." In that quiet time apart, he did all of his best thinking, made up his mind and crystallised his conclusions on the important problems that waited upon him for handling or solution. " One of your principal duties," he told me in Paris, " is to keep away from me yourself and to keep everybody else away from me for two hours every day. It does not matter when they are, morning, noon or night ; but without those two hours of quiet I cannot get through my work." These hours of intellectual retreat took different forms according to the times of day during which they could be enjoyed. The form that gave me the most anxiety was when he insisted upon going for long walks alone in Montmartre or Montparnasse or elsewhere and then finding his own way home. Often he got lost ; on

two occasions, in the dark, he fell over enemy guns which were decorating the streets in unexpected places; and once, when hopelessly stranded, he hailed a taxi and was immediately joined by an enterprising journalist who offered him 100,000 dollars for his *Memoirs*. Their car was run into by another before his answer could be recorded.

I have already mentioned that A. J. B. was fond of social relaxation in the evening after the day's work was done. He was what I believe is called "an inveterate diner out," and thoroughly enjoyed not only the company but the pleasures of the table, both food and wine. After dinner he played bridge with moderate skill or, when at Cannes, visited the Casino and indulged in a mild form of *chemin de fer* for an hour or so—never, so far as I can remember, with conspicuous success.

In music, too, he took a great delight and was an enthusiastic lover of the old Masters, especially of Handel, about whom he wrote with the authority of an expert. Bach and Beethoven were among his favourite composers, and he preferred instrumental to vocal music, with the exception of the full-blooded choruses and chorales from the Oratorios that he loved so well. Modern music had little charm, if any, for him; and in this connection I remember how patiently he would sit through dinner at his favourite restaurant in Paris until most of the clients had left and the noise of jazz and jingle had ceased, and would then ask the chef

d'Orchestre (a very gifted young Polish violinist) to play him some eighteenth-century French music, such as *La Précieuse* or the *Chanson Louis XIII* by Couperin, after which he would walk home contentedly to bed.

A word only about his love of motoring, a pursuit in which he was a keen pioneer ; of golf, which he did so much by speech and example to popularise throughout England ; of real tennis, which he played well in his University days, and watched in late years whenever a great match was going on ; and of Lawn Tennis, a game that he loved to play until he was seventy-eight years old. It is delightful to recall that I saw him play in the centre court at the old Wimbledon with Anthony Wilding, Caridia and two others ; and again at the new Wimbledon with three of the leading exponents of the game—of course when there were no spectators looking on. For horse-exercise he cared not at all. I remember his characteristic reply when a friend asked him why he did not hunt : " I do not see why I should break my neck because a dog chooses to run after a nasty smell." But in the precept, "*mens sana in corpore sano*," he was a profound believer, and his older friends tell me that in his younger days, as soon as his health permitted it, he was a fine shot with a rifle, a great walker and a ubiquitous cyclist in England, Scotland and through foreign parts.

What wonder then that, with all his professional

occupations, his leisured predilections and his personal attraction, he was for half a century a star performer, and then, as Alfred Lyttelton said, " a deeply interested spectator " in the human comedy. It was this latter talent for sympathetic spectatorship (as for listening to the conversation of others) that gained him hosts of friends in the many circles through which he moved, friends to whom a word or a message or a letter from him meant more than many of them would care to say.

DE AMICITIA

DE AMICITIA

In earlier pages of this *Memoir* I have stressed the magnetic effect of Arthur Balfour's personality, intellect and charm upon men and women, of all classes of society, who were brought into contact with him on the platform, in council, on the golf-course or at a dinner table. For the most part they were attracted by him, they admired him and, within a more limited range of society, they were his devoted friends. I have often tried to prove to myself, but generally unsuccessfully, that he returned in anything like equal measure the quality of friendship and devotion that were lavished upon him. Yet, indifferent he was not ; ungrateful he was not. What, then, are the reasons for this rooted impression of mine which only deepened the longer I knew him ?

I always thought of him really as a solitary being (*essentiellement solitaire*) ; whom philosophy and experience had taught to wrestle by himself with all the deep problems of life, to form his own conclusions upon them without external assistance, and to act upon those conclusions without hesitation or regret. To that extent one may say that he was

self-dependent and self-confident. He did not seem able to turn to a friend, in his perplexity, and ask for sympathy or advice ; he did not need, for his daily bread as it were, the sort of friendship that was offered him ; nor could he believe that any friendship of an almost devotional nature was wanted by anybody from him in return. The following excerpt from a letter (undated) to Lady Frances Balfour, and published at the end of her first volume of *Reminiscences*, throws some light on A. J. B.'s attitude toward friendship :

> " You are as necessary as you ever were—but how necessary is that ? How necessary are any of us to any of us ? It is enough that we should get on much worse without each other, and that surely may satisfy us unless we are very egotistical—or jealous."

Everything else that he had to give, his companionship and intellect and charm, he gave generously with both hands, whenever called upon ; his heart he kept to himself.

If one told him that an old colleague or friend had died, or that somebody was hurt because he had not answered their letters, or because he was supposed to have said or done something unjust, it never seemed to make any real impression upon him nor to be of any particular importance ; though he was quick to express sympathy or to soothe wounded feelings in language which unmistakeably expressed how genuine were his sentiments.

Yet, unless I am much mistaken, if he himself had been bereaved, or if friends had left his intimate letters neglected, or if he had felt himself unjustly treated, he would not have been helped by, nor expected, nor greatly appreciated, those outward signs of consolation which others so devoutly longed for from him.

It is almost as though Providence which, at his birth, had endowed him with a beautiful soul and with a brain that was to be consecrated in manhood to the highest uses, had encased that soul and that brain in a protective armour to shield them from the slings and arrows which would certainly be discharged against them to their hurt. And then it may be that, with a sub-conscious knowledge that he was to be the interpreter of youth and beauty and happiness, as well as of deep scientific truths and of political uprightness to his own and to succeeding generations, he increased the density of that armour, as though to make sure that neither pleasure nor pain nor disappointment nor death itself should penetrate it to distract him from the all-absorbing duties to which he had been called.

Many people, " the egotistical and the jealous " among them, may think this quality of self-repression a defect in an otherwise attractive character ; others, who believe they understood its basis, may regret it ; most of his friends could have wished for an A. J. B. more intimately demonstrative and sympathetic at important moments in their lives.

But not one of us offered him a grain less of our incense of devotion because his inner nature was less expansive than our own. I do not think, for example, that M. Clemenceau, one of the latest and sincerest of his admirers, who found in him "the most courteous and adamantine of men," [1] would have cared more for A. J. B. had the latter admitted him to the sanctuary of his heart, or if in business he had courted the embraces of the Tiger's unsheathed claws. There is an old French saying, that "*il y en a toujours un qui aime et l'autre qui se laisse aimer*." We may leave it at that; and thank God that our affection for Arthur Balfour suffered so little from this minor imperfection. To my eyes, the imperfections were few and unimportant in that noble character. I have read elsewhere that he was "petulant as a woman." So he was at times, but only about trivial things that went wrong and caused him momentary irritation.[2] It vexed him when people misunderstood what he meant, but it worried him still more that he could not understand how he had failed to make his meaning clear. But so far as the great things of life are concerned, I, at least, have never worked with a man of serener temper, nor with one who met adversity or success with such unvarying

[1] "Le plus cultivé, le plus gracieux, le plus courtois des hommes inflexibles."—*Grandeurs et misères d'une victoire*, p. 124. G. Clemenceau.

[2] Irrelevant interruptions, forgetting engagements, and the incursions of press-photographers upon his privacy, always upset him.

In Memoriam.

Lord Balfour

Not the desire of fame – he cared for none
Who better loved the Muses' shade and glades –
Drew him to face the arena's dust and sun
And the clash of ringing blades.

To put his knightly honour to the proof,
This was the call that made his destiny clear –
Service that claimed a mind serene, aloof,
And a heart too great for fear.

No triumph moved his spirit's inward calm;
Lightly he met defeat and paid the cost,
Content that other hands should bear the palm
So the game were cleanly lost.

Noble of manners, touched with nothing base,
He when his keenest lance laid a rival low,
"Favour his own advantage", such the grace
That has passed and left no foe.

And we, whose wondering pride the charm confessed
Of that fine courtesy of speech and thought,
We bring the tribute, where he lies at rest,
Of a love he won unsought.

Punch March 10. 1930

Owen Seaman
[to Ian Malcolm]

equanimity. Sir Owen Seaman well expressed this splendid quality in his noble tribute to A. J. B., published in *Punch* on March 26, after his death :

> No triumph moved his spirit's inward calm ;
> Lightly he met defeat and paid the cost,
> Content that other hands should bear the palm
> So the game were cleanly lost.
>
> Noble of manners, touched with nothing base,
> He, when his bright lance laid a rival low,
> " Forebore his own advantage " ; such the grace
> That has passed and left no foe.

With those words ringing in our ears, we may safely leave the man with the moral microscope to detect insignificant flaws in a personality that stood in the fierce light of public criticism for fifty years and passed through the ordeal unscathed.

BALFOUR AND FOCH

BALFOUR AND FOCH

The modesty of Arthur Balfour was one of his most endearing qualities ; in that, and in other respects, he had much in common with a man for whom he had a great admiration, the late Maréchal Foch. I saw them often together in Paris and have since been struck with the truth of General Weygand's appreciation of his great Chief's character (published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, May 1929) in words which might well have been applied to A. J. B. In one place he writes of the impression made upon visitors who came to see the Maréchal in his office :

" They were all impressed when they left him, impressed and attracted by him. He may not have spoken many words to them, but they contained the root of the matter, which he treated on the highest plane and in the fewest possible words. His visitors took their leave, surprised by the penetration and breadth of his mind, and charmed by the simple way in which he received them."

And again :

" In speech one was fortified by his faith, convinced by the warmth of his words, and invigorated by the sense

of a latent energy that would take control and command if necessary. But his brain was the real source of his strength of character. In his case decision was the child of knowledge."

It was true of Foch, as Napoleon said of himself : " No happy intuition inspires me to act in a certain way under unexpected circumstances. My decisions are the result of reflection and premeditation." And General Weygand adds : " The greatest service that his subordinates could render him was to arrange for him to have time for quiet consideration by sparing him unnecessary interviews and the worry of attending to details which the execution of his instructions involved." The result was that " his serenity was felt by all who came near him ; and when, at critical moments, he suddenly appeared at some Army Headquarters, although his orders might be disconcerting for the moment, yet his moral fearlessness created an atmosphere of security and the impression that he had overcome every difficulty." These things were true also of A. J. B. ; as also the following :

" The simplicity of Maréchal Foch was principally founded upon his very high sense of duty. It seemed to him perfectly natural to do his duty wherever he might be called upon, and to do it as well as possible. He expected no thanks for it. . . . But he never claimed the whole credit for his great successes. These he shared with his lieutenants and his colleagues. That shewed how really modest he was—with a modesty noble and sincere like everything else about him."

It is sometimes said of the Scottish race that its members get on better with foreigners, mix better, than do their neighbours over the border. In the case of my Chief, it was certainly true that he had a genius for feeling at home in any foreign company, and for making people of other nationalities—perhaps especially Americans and Frenchmen—feel comfortable with him. He was so kind, so genial, so unobtruding, so accessible wherever he went ; his thoroughbred appearance and manners, his disarming smile and shining radiance made him a universally welcome guest from his young manhood on to the last years of his life. These are qualities which, displayed by a person of our nationality, the foreigner appreciates and never forgets. The tributes paid to his memory by his foreign war-colleagues and by the European and American press are proof-evident of this statement. I must quote one of them (from the French), for it interprets so exactly the impression made upon all who came into contact with him during the last few years :

" He assumed the coquetry of old age with so much natural grace that it became him. When one saw him attending a Levée of his Sovereign, dressed in his Court uniform and silk knee-breeches and wearing the Order of the Garter, one bowed low before this noble survival of a brilliant past."

"VALE"

"VALE"

THAT is the kind of picture of A. J. B. in the flesh that I hope I may carry to my grave: the last phase; negligently exquisite to the end, mellow in outlook, charming, lovable and infinitely serene, even during the closing days of his long illness. "The last of the Athenians," Stanley Baldwin called him, and the title was a just one: "the philosopher of statecraft and the statesman of philosophy" was another epitaph, from France, which was as graceful as it was true. It may be that, by his tastes and talents, he belonged by right to the eighteenth century; yet how grateful should we be to Providence that he did not appear upon the scene until we could be present to admire him, and to know, after he had passed across the stage, the place that he held in the affections of his countrymen and in the esteem of the civilised world.

It requires no gift of prophecy to foretell that, for long years to come, the memory of A. J. B. will have a sure and sheltered place of honour in the hearts of all who knew and served him, and in the archives of the Monarchs and the countries that he served.

For he was more than a great statesman and a great philosopher who had long been recognised as a leader, no matter what path he trod. He was above all a shining example of a great-hearted Christian gentleman, whose matchless character has enriched the treasure house of the country that gave him birth. Well spoken were the words of his parish minister, Mr. Lang, at the funeral service at Whittingehame, when he said that "the truths of our holy religion were the possession of his inmost soul." And well ordered the prayer then uttered, when his own folk thanked God

"for those gifts of heart and mind by which Lord Balfour had 'enriched the world, hindered the forces of evil, advanced the kingdom of truth, righteousness, goodwill and peace in the world by his service to our Country and Empire and to peoples and nations beyond our shores.'"

May he rest in peace.

THE END

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY ROBERT MACLEHOSE AND CO. LTD
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS GLASGOW.